

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This invention provides an image processing technique which can reduce low- and high-frequency noise components while suppressing adverse effects such as a resolution drop and the like. A pixel of interest and its surrounding pixels are extracted from input image data (S9001), and the extracted pixels are separated into two categories using the average value of the extracted pixels (S9004). The average pixel values of these categories are calculated (S9005), and a value, which is approximate to the pixel value of the pixel of interest, of the calculated average pixel values of the categories, is output as smoothed data (S9006).